Research Proposal.

There are many things about a community that can be studied. Some kinds of investigation, like the study of community power structure, have been fairly well standardized. For example, it has been asserted*

* By Irwin T. Sanders, in "The Community Social Profile," American Journal of Sociology, 1960, 75-77.

that the community leaders can now be identified and adequately interviewed by a four or five-man team in a short period of time.

Similarly, the problems of unrequited hard work and the differential effects of personal economic strategies call for investigation which is not just sociological. Of the two spheres, business and farming, and two modalities of behavior, stagnant and striving, As the authors take pains to point out, there is no substantive social justice.

one is not necessarily more successful just from being "striving" instead of "stagnant":

	Striving	Stagnant
Farm	Success	Failure
Business	Failure	Success

Success comes as a result of complex market factors, with their origins mainly elsewhere.

matters of over time would be ... as a sociological study ... factors — the model ones for the historical period ... the study is made ... related to the changing ... of markets to come.

But while these are important ... it would take us too far afield to discuss them here.

It is rather for some of the more elaborate models, not necessarily so evident to the scholarly reader as the authors claim ( ), that we should be interested in Vidich and Bensman on basic research.

The topics treated by Vidich and Bensman which seem to me to have the most germinal importance are those which deal with organized reference-concepts (idea-systems) and coherent, organized characterizations ... behaviors ...

The more interesting models are models of 1) organized sets ... 2) psychological reference systems.

5.25/1.25

It will have been noticed that throughout this paper we have pointed out a certain type of model, the "organized idea" consisting of a cluster of elements unified by a central principle. The Vidich-Bensman notions of "class" were of this kind; so were the "images" of Springdale" and the "image of the city" they described; In their ... the central principle was the fundamental (Keynesian) choice of economic strategy, around which many behaviors would organize themselves.

... the individual ... acquires an organized psychological rationale consonant with this -- a system and arrangement of hope and sense. These jointly determine the defense strategy he must employ to forget his ... failure.

When eventually guilt and failure had to be rationalized, the mental strategy chosen would be the "natural" one for the previous economic strategy- another unified cluster.

For some reason the notion of "idea" has been generally eschewed by contemporary social science.*

* Festinger uses the term "belief," but in a narrower sense. The term as used here is virtually synonymous with the term "personal construct" as used by Kelly. For an exception to the trend see Theodor H. Nelson, "Commitment to Ideas," Interdisciplinary Paper for Harvard Department of Social Relations, 1961.

This ~~despite the fact that~~ Many of the fiercest ~~prive~~ materialists-- for instance, Marx-- have used the term in a manner close to common usage, denying not that ideas existed or were interesting, but that they were independent ~~causality~~ variables in human behavior. This is a difficult problem on several levels of subtlety, and we will ignore it here. We will assume ~~assuming~~ merely that interesting ~~quentx~~ operational questions may be propounded using the concept of "idea."

Hegel and Dilthey investigated the ~~[illegible]~~ development, completion or ~~of~~ "perfection" of ideas with a powerful internal dynamic. Weber studied ~~the~~ and attempted to characterize unities of ideas that underlay certain trends and coherences in the social world. The "ideal types" of Weber* -- especially the models ~~[illegible]~~ of imperative control-- are such clusters of ~~seem to me to be [illegible]~~ ideas and of behavior. ~~which~~ These ideas and behaviors are ~~were~~ highly organized* ~~perhaps almost hypnotically are over-organized~~ by unifying concepts. The extent of this organization -- one might almost call it hypnotic -- ~~These~~ prevented other possible organizations and organizing concepts from being noticed. ~~as pointed out by~~ ~~-- from being noticed~~ For ~~ix~~ example, collegial professionalism as described by Parsons, ~~[illegible]~~ Hughes and others ~~[illegible]~~ is a collection of ideas and behavior elements ~~[illegible]~~ which (though they ~~[illegible]~~ appear separately under Weber's headings of charismatic, traditional and bureaucratic control) are nonetheless organized in quite a new fashion.

* These views of the three men have been acquired through ~~[illegible]~~ integrative summary and hearsay, and ~~[illegible]~~ should not be identified with any concrete reference.

Roughly, the notion of "organized set of ideas" as used here can refer either to behaviors or merely to mental contentsw, unified by x central concepts in either case. ~~the~~ As a rationale of this it makes no difference whether we ~~xxx~~ call mental contents a form of behavior, or behavioral items the result of thoughts. ~~We will limit ourselves, however, to items and organizations which are fairly close to consciousness.~~ While we will allow unconscious ~~items~~, we will not here discuss organizing principles which are far from consciousness.

The organization of reference concepts can be studied as a psychological variable to which men respond; not, necessarily, as Hegel, Dilthey or Weber seem to have thought, an ontological property of the ideas themselves.

Thus the dynamics and organization of ideas is a branch of reference theory.

N.P.

By "reference theory" or "reference psychology" we shall mean any systematic study of the people, things or ideas that men think about. This is in line with such usages as "reference group" (Stouffer) or "professional reference group" (Vidich and Bensman.) ~~And we shall treat the~~

N.P.

We will not here discuss the ontology of ideas: what they "truly" are, or what necessity really pertains to their internal dynamic. ~~However,~~

5,27/-1

Instead we shall attempt some operational definitions.

Let me present some nonmetaphysical*/* In fact, philosophically quite unsatisfactory./ definitions of "idea," "principle of organization" and "idea-cluster," and then look for ways of operationalizing the study of their effects upon people.

An idea is the representation (in consciousness or storage) of any element, thing, concept or item that can be thought or thought about.

A principle is an idea that may be used to unify other ideas in the mind. Thus if an idea helps you to group two other ideas together, or set out a number of ideas into a string which is easily remembered, summarized or thought about, it is such a principle. (Such a principle need not uniquely determine the resultant grouping; for instance, at one moment you might use a given principle to organize one set of ideas A, at another moment a different set of ideas B, which may or may not have elements in common with A.)

An idea-~~cluster~~ congeries* is a set of ideas which tend to stay together--that is, tending to occur together in some context, or jointly increasing in their probability of occurrence or association in an individual's utterances. In other words, one makes you think of another.

The organization of an idea-congeries is the extent to which its component ideas are grouped by principles in a stable fashion. This idea has meaning for an individual or for a group.

*Though the word "cluster" is preferable, I will use the term "congeries" ~~here despite its ...~~ to avoid confusing it with the entities distinguished by cluster analysis.

¶ mounting a research project to study a town is large, difficult and delicate.

The Springdale materials (Small Town, JSI) are not so explicit or extensive or finished that it is possible to tell what kinds of investigation were explicitly planned into the study, or what will yet come of it. ~~Those published materials~~ which ~~give a picture~~ The picture we get from the of the intents and strategy of the general investigation are quite impressive./ Because of these unknown and good qualities, (In this research proposal it is impossible) to make specific criticisms of the Springdale work. Similarly, it would hardly be reasonable to plan another study in toto in space, assuming even the range of interests and competences represented by the staff of the Springdale project.

Hence the suggestions made here will be related only to that part and those interpretations of the material reported by Vidich and Bensman, and only some of that; and it will be assumed that my suggestions for study could be tacked onto some other general study, or performed by one or two workers in a similar town.

Here are some questions which would help corroborate, demolish or reconstruct the cluster-notions that the authors present:

~~The questions under investigation are these:~~

1) Are the clusters described by Vidich and Bensman the modal type on any statistical basis? (E.g., most "analytically powerful.")

2) Are the organizations they describe the modal organizations for clusters of behavior?

3) Are the behavior-clusters which are organized as Vidich and Bensman describes more durable than those which are not?

4) Are the clusters they describe more stable than those which lack this organization, and hence more likely as eventual adaptations?

~~These are only a few important questions that derive from the authors' theoretical formulations.~~

To MONSTER FOOTNOTE (27)

~~For the purpose of the~~ p

single-space

* For the purpose of this paper, I will give the notion "analytic power" a precise technical meaning. Suppose we have a number of individuals whose measurements are known on several dichotomous variables. Let us take a blank fourfold table, and label its axes "top" and "side" and its cells A, B, C and D.

Top

Side

A dichotomous variable may be arrayed on either the "top" or "side" dimension, but not both. If it is on the top, either possession of the quality will assign an individual to one of the cells of the first column and the absence of the quality to one of the cells of the second column; or vice versa. Similarly, if the variable is assigned to the side, its presence in the individual will assign the individual to one row, its absence will assign the individual to the other row.

Roughly, the notion of "analytic power" is that property of the arrangement of dichotomous variables which will assign the most individuals to cells A and D.

For the present purpose we will use the cross-product ratio,

$$\frac{BC}{AD}$$

as our measure of association. This statistic gets smaller as the number of individuals in cells A and D increases and the number in B and C decrease. If the array is "perfect," with all individuals in cells A and D and no individuals in cells B and C, the cross-product ratio will be zero. A and D are supposed to contain the most individuals merely by convention. BC is made the numerator because if it were zero the ratio would be undefined, and we do not wish the statistic to be undefined under perfect conditions.

The disadvantage of the statistic is that if either B or C is empty the statistic is also zero, even if the other contains a ludicrously large number of individuals. However, because there is no room in this paper to iron out these problems, we will define "greatest analytic power" as that arrangement of dichotomous variables of a congeries which determines a distribution of individuals such that BC/AD is at a minimum.

However, relative analytic power is an important corollary concept. The relative analytic power is, roughly speaking, the extent to which changing the arrangements of dichotomies on the fourfold table will change the analytic power. Several different arrangements might equally have the minimum BC/AD. In this case we say that their analytic powers are equal but that their relative analytic power is less. All kinds of gradients are possible, but there is no room here to analyze the different implications of different gradients.

This technique is reminiscent of factor analysis, cluster analysis, and merely the rotation of axes. It uses descriptive rather than hypothesis-testing, statistics. I think, though, that it gives a clue to some new ways these problems may be operationally tested in the future.

There are ~~five or six~~ several ways we may test these ~~x~~ points: the successive ... the striving ... the rational and traditional farmers.

1) Interview materials for the specific economically defined classes. ten each (say) from General interview materials for samples from each of the Vidich-Bensman classes, economic decisions, are gathered, with attention to/consumption style and unifying personal comments, those summary principles with which the subjects describe their own lives. These data, when analyzed by such tests as the analytic-power test, should furnish evidence for theoretical alternatives in two spheres; the clustering of the behaviors into consistent congeries, and their organization, defined as the subjects' ability to explain their actions in varied but consistent ways, in terms of central reference concepts.

A) Clustering:

i) Vidich-Bensman: the Vidich-Bensman set of behavioral clusterings supplies the greatest analytic power, i.e. other or mixed strategies are less likely.

~~ii) Null hypothesis of no special clusterings of behavior which might only mean their list is incorrect, insufficient, or~~

ii) Null hypothesis: their list is wrong. This might mean that there are no special clusters, or that list is incorrect, insufficient, or subject to uncharted variations.

This analysis requires testing the hypothesis, in other words, that the proposed types are the most analytically appropriate; thus treating any "ideal type" realistically not nominally. While the statistical techniques of hypothesis-testing will not permit tests of alternatives and the formulation of new hypotheses. However, in this type of analysis the theoretical rationale only supports one particular arrangement, one organization of the congeries of attributes, which has a theoretical explanation. If this grouping is empirically disconfirmed, there is no immediately reconstituting it, say, from the empirical association of variables in the data. For this reason the analytic power of the typology should be tested as a specific hypothesis.*

*Problems of probability, degrees of freedom, etc. will be ignored here.

B) The organization of behavior in an individual's own terms is not specified by Vidich and Bensman. Thus an individual may have no generalized personal organization, and respond to suggestions and social influences as they come; another might say, "Well, in fact, following an ideal strategy on Keynesian dimensions." Clearly the images of "Springdale" and "the city", the chief referent-structures cited by Vidich and Bensman as psychological defenses, are not relevant to the subjects' economic behavior. Thus it is of intrinsic interest for us to investigate these alternatives.

i) Their behaviors are organized in typical ways around central referents, typical to the strategies of economic behavior. That is, people are aware of the organization.

ii) Organization is idiosyncratic, or varies.

iii) There is no special organization; the people don't know what they're doing.

C) Joint relation of clustering and organization of behavior. By cross-tabulating the way extent to which an individual's outlook is organized, with the extent he conforms to the Vidich-Bensman analytic type, we should find more usualness associated with more high organization.

Self-perceived Organization of Behavioral Cluster

Conformity to Vidich-Bensman Behavior Clusters		High	Low
	Usual	+	-
	Unusual	-	+

This hypothesis means that the people who did not have a high degree of self-perceived organization have failed to hit upon the "basic" strategies.

This would indicate less stability to the set of behaviors which has not acknowledged its fundamental Keynesian presumptions.*

*If the association ran in the other direction, it would require other interpretations.

It is also an appealing hypothesis that a strongly-organized point of view permits the clearminded maintenance of deviant sets of behavior. But this is a matter for empirical research.

While there are many other analytic possibilities-- e.g., partialing for tolerance-of-ambiguity-- this gives an idea of the general line of attack.

2) Panel analysis to study adaptations to emergent failure.

The project should similarly interview several dozen high school students, ~~are similarly interviewed~~, and their as well as their ideas of society and the opportunities in it optimistic hopes sympathetically noted. Over a period of several years after graduation from (or quitting) school they are followed for more interviews, and still asked about hopes and self-image. Over time, by simple analysis, there should be an increase in "defense mechanisms."

Specifically, we can expect to find the "Springdale image" and "city image" increasingly salient as they become increasingly frustrated. (A crude measure of frustration may be taken from the extent to which an individual's ambitions have fallen.)

For those who had less ambition to begin with-- a compound variable, involving motivational level, realistic knowledge and extent of frustration when interviews begin. More complex indices must be derived for these cases. In any event, the Vidich-Bensman prediction (itself virtually inevitable) is clear: that frustration will increase the absorption in cushioning idea-systems.

3) A general interview-sample of the whole town should be used here, with the general intent of testing the relations between unanimity, conceptual organization, frustration and actual contact with the negative-reference exemplars. city and the sh

3b) The chief positive idea-congeries of psychological reference are Springdale itself (a place of simplicity, friendliness and virtue) and "folks" (clean, pleasant, unpretentious yeomen.)

The corresponding negative concepts are "the city" (inchoate sinkhole of anonymity and degenerate worldliness and vice), and the shack people (raucous, voluptuous, irreverent loafers.)

strong internal organization and a compelling

it may be that

congeries

in terms of analytic power

the actually thinks and behaves

Especially, we would like to

increases the way that

have described

and the

We assume here that different kinds of contact with negative-reference exemplars will have different effects on the clustering and organization of the reference concepts, although there will be complications depending on the level of frustration. Roughly, we should expect clustering of ideas and behaviors to become more typical (according to the Vidich and Bensman types) and ideas to become more tightly organized, as a function of increasing cognitive dissonance; conversely, when cognitive dissonance occurs (as in amicable, equal relations with the shack people) the individual must cope with this dissonance by either changing the extent and direction of affiliation-disaffiliation or changing the clustering and organization of their idea-congeries.

Some of the questions we should be able to ask of these data are the following:

A) Does frustration increase the positive and negative polarity of these concepts for the individual, and his scale of affiliation with some, disaffiliation from the others?

B) Does pleasant contact with the shack people and the city make the clustering less typical (defining "typical" in terms of analytical power, as above) in order to cope with the ensuing dissonances?

C) What is the relation between organization of negative-reference concepts and frustration and contact? Vidich and Bensman would predict that frustration it seems to me, increases the conformance of idea-congeries to their ideal types and their organization, contact (if amicable) will increase (the exceptions' in mind and behavior, However, disagreeable

~~BIG SPACE~~

schedules for these purposes will be difficult, particularly with regard to indices of frustration. But this should be possible along the general lines described here.

[BIG SPACE]

Obviously these are not research questions about the association of two variables in a given universe, as is traditional for the typical "research question" of classical sociology. Rather, they are investigations of "concept validation," testing-- as is particularly reasonable on the examination of Vidich and Bensman's thesis-- whether their variables have the most analytic power.

We have here looked, very crudely, at some kinds of variables and types of analysis that might begin to make clear and testable theories that involve complex clusters of behavior which have as independent variables certain organizing principles in the mind. If the tone here has been critical of Vidich and Bensman, it is because of the book's subtlety and intrinsic interest, and the extent to which their analysis involves the reader.

Small Town in Mass Society, by Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman,*

* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958 (hardcover.) Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York (paperback.) Page references are for the hardcover edition. The ~~As a rule the p the two books Pagination in the~~ paperback is paginated to 320 pages instead of 314, so that page references ~~can~~ had be roughly extrapolated to the paper edition by adding one page for every ~~fifty~~ fifty.

is of interest ~~to~~ for a number of reasons, having to do both with substantive issues raised in the book and with intramural problems of team research in sociology. In this paper I will deal with several of these topics, noting substantive issues in particular, and tying the book in with some correlative material both in previous sociology and in the events and academic atmosphere that led to the publishing of the book. The paper ends with discussion of possible research techniques appropriate to some of the more interesting questions raised and ways of gearing them to research project of the "Springdale" kind. In the book, First I would like to say what the book is about; I will then try to cover the books general findings briefly placing ~~the~~ main points in the context of ~~identifying main points in~~ context of past beliefs and content past sociological research. ~~of the field.~~

In the ~~book's~~ preface ~~they~~ Vidich and Bensman ~~They~~ list their interests as follows:

1. The specific character of the relation between the rural community and the dynamics of modern, mass, industrial society.
2. The social and economic bases of rural class structure as these are determined by both internal and external processes.
3. The relationship between the overt public life of the community as enacted by its members in public situations and the individual's private actions and experiences.
4. The analysis of mechanisms of community integration and techniques of personal adjustment as these occur in the face of social, institutional and cultural cleavages and conflicts which continuously threaten these social and cultural values which have served as bases of integration and adjustment in the past.

In summary, this study is an attempt to explore the foundations of social life in a community which lacks the power to control the institutions that regulate and determine its existence. It is in this sense that the community is viewed as a stage on which major issues and problems typical of the society are played out. (vii-viii)

~~By and large, this is a correct list of what they describe. Several of these emphases are unique for community studies and do not describe. However, it is possible to have a number of dissatisfactions with them.~~

From the point of view of forensic sociology, however, we might ~~change the phrasing to show the authors' real emphases~~ ~~Another list of the book's interests~~ point up the authors' emphasis by a change of phrasing:

A) To contradict on today's terms the Tocquevillian analysis of small-town democracy as a fund of self-reliant political organization-- the backbone of the country, or perhaps the marrow.

B) To furnish instances for the sociological notion that individual psychology adapts to situational features on a more complex level than that of family or bodily engrams, long-implanted.

Origins and Findings.

~~ORIGINS~~

Many things on hand/can be considered with the things that came before them until they lose the distinctiveness they first had for us, or even, as in a Hegelian analysis, seem inevitable in the light of what had come before. ~~In another way,~~ History is also misleading in a special way in the social sciences.

~~VSTT~~ Not only are exact traces ...,

~~'History' misleading Exact traces~~

~~are vague~~ but resemblances in sociological ideas and research could be as much ~~could be as much~~ due to salient resemblances ~~the saliences of features of~~ of subject matter as to their historical tr... from previous workers. ~~history of~~

Bearing these things in mind, we shall look at the study in the light of some ~~antecedents~~ possible antecedents, without too much legalistic concern for paternity.

I will here attempt to combine the study's findings with citations of what came before ... through this ... a texture ... prose. ~~One reason~~ It may make Vidich and Bensman ... special features ...

To begin with, Small Town in Mass Society is genuinely about a ~~small~~ small town. "Springdale" is a cover name given to a town not far from Ithaca, New York. It has no movie theaters, no Negroes, or ~~industry~~ ... to speak of, and some twenty-five hundred people in it or oriented to it as their community. Its people are unsophisticated, neither ... nor very poor, and those who ... ~~Small Town~~

~~V&B is about a small town.~~

~~In the context~~ Not One of the book's closest antecedents in this context was ~~Plainv~~ Plainville, U.S.A., by James West.* In many ways the West study preceded the Vidich and Bensman work.

~~Plainville, U.S.A.~~

*New York: Columbia University Press, 1945; ~~paperback~~ Columbia Paperback edition, 1961. Page numbers are from the latter.

In this book West ~~detailed~~ sketched the atmosphere of a small town and its surrounding hills and woods, somewhere between the southern mountains and the ~~Midwes~~ midwestern plains. West lived there for more than a year. Plainville was in 1940 a town of 275, the main trading center for ~~several hundred~~ perhaps several hundred others in an area some twenty miles by eight (2-3...) ~~probably several hundred more.~~

~~Participant-observation, 'anthropological' method~~

West also used what may be called "the anthropological method." That is, he ~~began~~ began research without any clear-cut roster of research questions, with an elastic view of the nature of problems worthy of study, and with no imported theories to which he was committed at the outset. ~~And he spent~~ He lived with his people, and hung around with them ~~a great deal~~ of time in participant observation.

* These are, of course, benefit-of-the-doubt pleas. ~~Participant observation~~ ...

Springdale is at once partly aware of itself and partly not. Its small town ideology praises the virtues of warmth and neighborliness, professes to see no differences among its people, and quickly hides disconfirming signs. A special local, neighborly version of the Protestant Ethic lends a sense of social justice, by permitting one to judge one's neighbor in a quiet sort of way. A variety of community functions — a "mardi gras," basketball, PTA clubs — furnish collective representations and a sense of belonging.

An earlier work in which these ideas were developed was Middletown, ~~by Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd~~* in which

* Middletown, a Study in Modern American Culture, by

~~Other aspects were shared~~, in places, with other ~~community studies~~. For instance, the Lynds' Middletown also specified the Protestant Ethic into a local setting.

Lynds Also: (v I) →

the Unifying 'booster' images (BASKETBALL suppress differences) (485)

... in Trans. had Image Analysis in Ch. XII, "the Middletown Spirit," 85 pp & [illegible]

VLTT Boosterism Provincialism of author

Mistaken view of the public optimism of public behavior as being unique to the small town (303-4). FTNT: Clear the authors have been under-exposed to environments (such as Madison Avenue, Hollywood, the small college, graduate school) where the open adoption of a cynical or personalistic view will make one seem to be dangerous company for the career, disagreeable, as well as [illegible]

"Simplicity" is indeed an accurate characterization. West emphasized the town's self-image of simplicity. But side-by-side,

Middletown also delineated the town's economic self-misunderstanding (the natural-gas boom is an easy example,) and a sense of urgency and of contemporaneity.

West also charted the town's economic self-misunderstanding. In detail he emphasized the quasi-subsistence economy of the town: people were not aware of the monetary value of the food and other supplies they grew themselves or traded, so that their understanding of money was unclear, as well as their understanding of the economic problems of people on relief.

(In Springdale the same function was performed by Vidich.)

A town is not just a place, role and behavior. It is also a collection of experiences and ideas that give order and sustain personal meaning for its people. Thus Springdale is at once partly aware of itself and partly not. Its small-town ideology praises the virtues of warmth and neighborliness, professes to see no differences among its people, and quickly hides disconfirming signs. A special local, neighborly version of the Protestant Ethic lends a sense of social justice, by permitting one to judge one's neighbor in a quiet sort of way. A variety of community functions-- churches, club, American Legion parade, a "mardis gras," basketball, the PTA-- furnish collective representations and a sense of belonging.

Plainville's people, although less ideologically militant perhaps because of the marginal sustenance of businesses and the stubborn radicalism of a certain Populist old guard-- were united by ideals of friendliness and simplicity, by vague, renewable Godliness, and by basketball games.

An earlier work in which these ideas were developed was Middletown,* in which these things were specified into another local setting, Muncie, Indiana, in the 1920's. The Protestant Ethic appeared there, too, in a good deal wordier fashion, as enunciated weekly by the business clubs. Here, too, basketball was also cited (485) as a factor in suppressing differences and reinforcing the common consciousness.) The extensive "image analysis" undertaken by Vidich and Bensman in their second chapter parallels one in the second Muncie study, Middletown in Transition.* Both of the towns share an ebullient-spirited

* Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929.

* Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937.

public image. Yet Vidich and Bensman express the view that the optimism of public behavior is in some way unique to the small town (303-4.)* There was less effort to sustain organized optimism

* Clearly the authors have been under-exposed to environments (such as Madison Avenue, Hollywood, the small college, graduate school) where the open adoption of a cynical or personalistic view which is in fact accurate will make one seem to be disagreeable, as well as dangerous company for the careers of your acquaintances.

in Plainville, ~~it was still characterized by West for its/simplicity, self-image of~~

However, in the studies of all three towns there is note made of/self-misunderstanding. In Muncie, for example, the economic expansiveness of the days of the gas boom, when people thought it would last forever, and the refusal to recognize the Depression when it came. West emphasized the quasi-subsistence economy of that town: people were not aware of the monetary value of the food and other supplies that they grew themselves or traded; their understanding of money was hence unclear, as well as their understanding of the economic problems of people on relief.

In its handling of face-to-face and behind-the-back dealings-- particularly of gossip-- *Plainville* also presaged the account in *Small Town* (e.g. 41ff.) However, *Plainville* showed gossip as mainly a social pleasure and harassment, whereas *Small Town* attempted to relate it to the public ideology. Similarly, both works mention the silent "bookkeeping" of favors, such as the borrowing of food or tools, in which there is no mention of repayment but the favors are remembered all the same.

* When the "true-culture" tradition was at its height in sociology, it was even held that gossip was a function of social decay and disorganization! See

William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1927, volume 2, p. 1171.

#00[illegible]

They claimed that gossip was a decayed form of social opinion, not indigenous to the really flourishing culture! #00589

Class?

The class analysis presented by Vidich and Bensman is curious in many respects. The most curious is the question of why the population percentages only add up to 90% (uncorrected in the paperback, which was set in separate type.) Was it a funny mistake, or are they leaving someone out? (51)

Then, again, it is not entirely clear why these groupings are sufficient to be called "classes," while other possible partitionings are not. For instance, the "middle class" sums to 47% while the old aristocracy amounts to 1%. (more than 1/2 of 90%)

What is the purpose of confounding things by prizing "professionals and skilled factory workers" into the same group? (57-8)*

* According to Devereux, many of them are unskilled. See "Leadership and Participation in a Changing Rural Community," Journal of Social Issues, 1960, Number Four, page 10, paragraph 6. (hereafter refered to as JSI;)

The Vidich-Bensman rationale is that both groups have a "fixed ceiling on their incomes." This would seem to be a curious reason for singling out a doctor or a lawyer. For someone determined to list professionals with industrial workers, some other distinction--like their ties together in the community (60) would seem to do it better. Or again, they might be distinguished intensionally because each category has an external occupational reference group-- management in one case, the collegiate body of the profession in the other. However, after these arguments it is compelling to believe they grouped the data by these categories because together they only came to 9%. (51)

One item that throws a small amount of puzzlement on that class definitions by psychology is the assertion that "only" 6 out of 50 businessmen were investing capital. (53-4) While

this is not a great quantity, and may be somewhat unclear owing to accounting practices, for ten percent to be investing would not seem to be the stereotype we had been offered earlier. The workers only old capital are also of interest, to get a rounded picture.

~~Power? Similarly, the Vidich-Bensman report of the centralization of power lacks for clear summary. The authors have of course attempted to say what the findings of political control really mean.~~

Power?

Similarly, the Vidich-Bensman report on the centralization of power lacks for clear summary. The authors have of course attempted to say what the findings on political control really mean:

For instance, Vidich and Bensman claim that "To all intents and purposes the village, the traditional farmers, the shack people, the workers, and the middle class are disenfranchised." (214) This is blatantly false. The traditional farmer "James West" won the Republican primary for town supervisor on a platform of turning the rascals out, and came very close to winning the election, 225 to 258.

Disenfranchised people do not vote. The Clark Negroes [illegible] the parts of the South "disenfranchised" because they may not safely vote. By Could one reasonably call American socialists "disenfranchised" because they always lose?

Moreover, as noted by Goodchilds and Harding (JSI, 53n.) Vidich and Bensman seem to consider the shunting of problems from local government to voluntary organizations or personal arrangements, as they do in Springdale, "disgraceful."

They claim to show that the domination of village business by businessmen, of town and school business by the prosperous farmers, is in some strong sense neither representative nor beneficial.

The authors claim that the village board, are "incompetent" (116,) for they do not have big vocabularies or a sense of technicalities for governing (115); moreover, their outlook, warped by "business or some other specialization" (115-6,) "prevents their acquiring a perspective broad enough to encompass the range of political sentiment represented in the community." (116)*

* In the spring of 1957, on assignment for a college course, I sat through three (long, as I recall) sessions of the Media (Pennsylvania) Borough Council. My observations there make me certain that the Vidich-Bensman description of the village board in Springdale is accurate and insightful. Thus it is the problems of interpretation and possible advocacy that need discussion.

Naturally, Vidich and Besman do not overtly take any particular stands on issues within the community, but it does seem that their general characterization of the do-nothing boards is roughly equivalent.

(The village board is not criticized for "doing nothing" about foreign affairs or disarmament, for they are clearly outside their provenience. Similarly, if the village board does not establish, say, a museum or historical archive, they are not criticized as "doing nothing," since, although they certainly may do these things, they have no particular reason to. The term is reserved for issues in which it is also evident to somebody--as it happens, Springdale's professional-industrial class--that something should be done.)

To say the village board "does nothing" in fact suggests that they should have done something about snow removal, parks and street lights, the specific issues on which they "did nothing."

However, any, explicit, criticism of Springdale's control by social scientists would have to be on a more general level. So they criticize instead the stages of discussions and actions, which

Plans can be effected, interests can make themselves felt, and trends can turn to action or be deflected.

... they apparently think the professional-industrial class does not have ... access on the relevant decision and discussion. On the other hand it is doubtful that the authors would advocate a

The authors do not specify, though, how these inequities could be ameliorated; ~~in this lack of specification,~~ therefore, it is hard to discern what they mean. But it is difficult, on reflection, to see what philosophically they would consider more representative. For it would seem unlikely that a political chamber accused of not doing enough would increase in initiative by expanding its "range of political sentiment," increasing divisiveness by including, say, shack people, ritualists, old families, psychological idiosyncratics, or even traditional farmers; rather, throughout the book they evince an extracurricular interest in, and sympathy for, the professional-industrial class, the only liberals in Springdale.*

* That this general attitude may have been shared by other members of the entire Cornell study group is suggested by the Cornell project's donation of $250 to the Community Club. (JSI 48)

On the other hand it is doubtful that the authors would advocate, say,

~~Conceivably they might advocate~~

~~What are the ways in that substantive democracy could be achieved?~~

~~One of the most obvious solutions would be~~ a simple exchange of elites, in which the professionals would be put in charge of everything. Clearly, by virtue of education, modernity, commitment to the dynamic of social participation, and a relation to the economic sphere which is responsive rather than aggressive (and hence by some metaphysic unlikely to be in any sense "parasitically" oriented,) they are obviously the Platonic "men of gold" best suited to rule.

However, I think it of significance that this class is only 9% of the population,* while the independent entrepreneurs, whose interests run the village, are 13%, and the rational farmers, who run the township, compose another 25%.

* Their figures, which, it is to be remembered, only sum to 90%. However, this is percentage by families, and we do not know whether the professional-industrial group have more, or less, children. But these figures are the only ones available.

If there must be a permanent elite for the village, and if it must be drawn from some one of the Vidich-Bensman classes, on the basis of both relative size and economic commitment it is hard to see why the status quo as described is not the most reasonable. Surely the professionals, if they came to power as a bloc, would be likely to make positive incursions of the business classes, mainly through taxes, more sweeping and uncomfortable for the latter than the "negative incursions" are now for them.

Surrender?

Perhaps the most impressive notion in the book, and the most typical for Vidich and Bensman's analysis, is denoted by the term "the rural surrender." The idea they wish to convey is that local government is today hamstrung by the administrative jurisdictions and regulations of superordinate political and bureaucratic agencies. With money and services these outside agencies have bought the pride and self-reliance of the small town, inflating it instead with the scheming false pride of the yokel who thinks he has bought a "gold brick" cheated somebody in the process.

> A defeat is turned to victory or is twisted in a way to make it appear to be an advantage for the community either by forgetting the central (and lost) issue or by emphasizing peripheral and pseudo issues; thus the subsidy or the state-supported road is always a victory over urban life. (295)

(The description is more of a reporter than the thought it describes, that the subsidy is a victory over urban life, as the disproportionate state monies for rural areas indicate.)

2.17.7

To be sure, goes the analysis, local life has always been in many ways dominated by the outside, and local "culture" has always been an accretion of fashions and ideas imported from the urban centers. But the rural surrender they intend to disclose is the relinquishment of political decision and moral autonomy. It seems to have the following components:

1) Adjusting, albeit resentfully (113), to outside administrative rulings, subsidies and standards (e.g., the placement of a state-standardized road sign.) "... at almost every point in this seemingly broad base of political domain the village and town boards adjust their action... [to outside agencies] or to the fact that outside agencies have the power to withhold subsidies to local political institutions." (99) But is this surrender or ... It might be asserted that this is more like "surrendering" various investigative functions to the FBI than, as they argue at length (113), the surrender of Merovingian kings to the major-domo. Presumably it will be discovered some day when towns seek to reclaim old functions or when new functions are needed...

2) Failing to do things that one might think they ought to do; specifically, garbage delivery and establishing parks. (100) But, as was said above, this is more of a quibble on issues.

2.18.7

3) Consequent psychological inanition:

> Psychologically this dependence leads to an habituation to outside control to the point where the town and village governments find it hard to act even where they have the power... The narrowing of legal jurisdictions by psychologically imposed limits leads to an inability to cope with local problems if outside resources are not available.

Of the three aspects of "surrender," only the third would seem to justify that term, and in a corrigible sense: like the "surrendering" to television or drink, it is an unfortunate condition but one for which [illegible]

Blindly Retreat?

2,16/7
~~2,15/78~~

Plainvillers, the authors say, feel (but cannot identify)

~~Sometimes~~

~~Let us examine this. /What things have confronted them?~~

myriad incursions from outside, like TV, ~~and~~ the prices on the milk shed, and the frustrations of thwarted ambitions.

*Objectively, the community members live in a world which they do not conyrol. They come to this world, however, with a belief in their ability to shape their own destinies. In fact, in almost every sphere of their lives they find their inherited beliefs and traditions at odds with their institutions and social environment.

But the people of Springdale are unwilling to recognize the defeat of their values, their personal impotence in the face of larger events and any failure in their way of life. By techniques of self-avoidance and self-deception, they strive to avoid facing issues which, if recognized, would threaten this total fabric of their personal and social existence. Instead of facing the issues, they make compromises and modify their behavior in some cases and reaffirm their traditional patterns in other cases. They do this, however, without any overt conscious recognition of the basic problems. (313-4)

The claim that people do not know what is going on, however, has one proviso. Objectivity is possible if it is just another escape mechanism.

ULT π — AS QUOTE — YOU CAN'T WIN —

farmers businessmen & others may view the world

... some societal forces enables ... himself from personal blame by attaching the ... ~~specific~~ impersonal forces over which ... has no control. While his analysis may be correct in general form, it frequently does not ... picture of the specific individual in situation ... not fail (295)

~~YOU CAN'T WIN.~~

In other words, you can't win. ~~Even objectivity is just an escape. However~~ ... a position to know the world, except for the shack people,* ... facts and ~~so repudiate~~ therefore repudiate political and community participation (151!)

~~Of failures of available ...~~ the town. There is nowhere to turn in this overdetermined system, that Vidich and Bensman have not charted and labeled as cuts in their maze. ~~...~~ the only things to do in Plainville. About

[CUTS]

If one has any sense of pride and awareness, then, are either to fight for survival or leave. ~~The~~ Latter alternative is ~~hardly mentioned by Vidich~~ ~~as a psychological solution~~

~~although ...~~

Only a quarter of the town's occupants today were born there, and a large proportion came since the war. For its size to remain roughly constant, as it has, as many must go as came. Yet the alternative of leaving is hardly mentioned as a psychological solution by Vidich and Bensman, even though it is unparalleled as a solution and apparently the alternative that the authors chose for themselves.

* ~~Except~~ And perhaps sociologist Riesley, for example, lives there. (HO 58-9)

ULT π

Plainville: ~~affects~~ Falls to ... ~~...~~ to those who leave ... or to outmigration ... as ... ~~...~~

Only 25% born there. The people who pass each other going in & out. all motivated

Unique Problems of the Study.

It must be first understood, if one is to understand the problems of Vidich and Bensman's book, that the material presented there is on the nature of a secondary analysis: seizing parts of the data selectively, the authors use it to instantiate general theories which were not taken into account when designing the research. ~~How derivative~~ This is legitimate, and such progress as there is in the academic world could not take place unless it were. But it has special problems, the data is not always well-honed to the current purpose or even available. As it happens, Vidich and Bensman had special problems of their own.

The history of the Springdale project*

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* Reported in the Journal of Social Issues, 1960, Volume 16, Number 4: "Leadership and Participation in a Changing Rural Community," edited by John Harding, Edward C. Devereux, Jr., and Urie Bronfenbrenner, referred to as JSI. A more poignant account of how the project was originally conceived is to be found in Urie Bronfenbrenner and Edward C. Devereux, Jr., "Interdisciplinary planning for team research on constructive community behavior," Human Relations 5 (1952,) 187-203. Material on the details and problems of the Vidich hegira, accusing, defensive and philosophical, are the several articles from Human Organization. From 17:2 (Summer 1958,) "Editorial: Freedom and Responsibility in Research: the 'Springdale' Case," unsigned, presumptively by William Foote Whyte. (Henceforth to be called HO 58.) From 17:4 (Winter 1958-59,) comments by Vidich and Bensman, Risley, Ries, and Becker. (Henceforth HO 58-9.) From 18:2 (Summer 1959,) comments by Bell, and Bronfenbrenner. (HO 59.) (These articles will be ~~henceforth called HO 58, HO 58-9, and HO 59.~~)

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is very interesting as a case study in the conceptual changes for research, as well as the moral problems brought up in the later controversy.

The staff of Cornell University's Department of Child Development and Family Relationships were originally concerned with studying the factors that make people creative in a social setting. As reported by Bronfenbrenner and Devereux,*

* op. cit.

their initial efforts were a sort of comedy of horrors. In the early stages they set up Bales-type small-group inversional discussion-- discussion of the groups, and of what aspects of the groups to look at the information or discuss, etc.

These studies, while conducted with the most sanctimonious and scientific air, engendered such hostilities and psychosomatic symptoms in their participants that the staff decided it was not contributing to knowledge, and decided to expand the framework of research.

~~In an ironic ... these experimental groups, ... tormoil, garbled discussion ... the staff group itself ... and inefficiency. Bronfenbrenner and Devereux give ... benefit of a quarrelingly ... early picture of their relations ... understanding & confusions ... from the most sanctimonious ... attempts at discussion & analysis & ... by group dynamic methods ... which ...~~

~~The resulting atmosphere and attitudes ... the latter ... This tale evidences the development of an atmosphere and attitudes which make quite possible ... the latter ... behavior of Vidich, in which case he is ...~~

Then, now turned to tactics involving more natural settings, they tried to understand what factors made for creative leadership by taking known creative leaders, giving them projective tests, and showing their tests "blind" to experienced analysts. But the findings were quite odd: the analysts claimed that all the subjects were severely neurotic, some virtual mentally crippled. The only "normal" profile came from one person (thrown in as a control) who attended meetings but contributed nothing to them. (194)

(Interestingly, however, the analysts' descriptions had a sort of rightness about them; while they were wrong about the extent of creative participation, the overall descriptions of the subjects were good. (195, 195n)

But from the point of view of "interdisciplinary team research," things were not going very well. Not only had the results been indecisive and disagreeable, but the staff meetings which were supposed to guide research had been of the most unsatisfactory kind, rife with misunderstanding, the taking of stands, the mutual unintelligibility of far-fetched theoretical formulations, ranting and bickering. For some people this was difficult to understand, as the meetings had been designed by group-dynamics methods for the most sanctimonious and permissive discussion and analysis. This state of affairs is of interest here because it may have had something to do with Vidich's later disaffection,* either from his own participation or contamination from the resulting atmosphere and attitudes. If that is true, he is not easily condemned.

* I find it also of great intrinsic interest, partly because of my own participant observation of the same processes in academic groups of the most diverse composition. It stands in interesting contrast to the harmonious inactivity of the Boards of Springdale, who seemed to me to accomplish more. Indeed, perhaps eventually some anti-Vidich [illegible] the various covert competition and dissension of academic groups with material on reaction-formation against the Gemeinschaft ideal.

in fact shows psychological reference to country towns, being a

It was decided to shift research to a real community with the intent of seeing leadership in its natural community setting, and things went more smoothly with the re-broadening.*

* As well as with changes in the delegation, communication and confrontation patterns of staff.

Arthur J. Vidich was at this time appointed Field Director, to live in Springdale throughout the core time-period of the project, 1950-2.

[illegible] collaboration [illegible] elsewhere,) wrote [illegible] of things in Springdale [illegible] project, [illegible] the interest of one stage. They had [illegible] the [illegible] (Their version, HO 59-9.)

[illegible] claimed policy procrastination

After the main work of the project was done, Vidich and Bensman removed to Puerto Rico, where (building from the earlier papers) they wrote Small Town in Mass Society. Returning with manuscript in hand, they were told by the Cornell group that they could not use the data and would have to get various permissions in the town before publication. They refused, claiming policy procrastination as giving them rights or just to publish, excised all the hard data that they felt they could, and published anyway! (Their account, HO 58-9.)

It is not clear to the reader just what the understanding had been. According to Whyte (HO 58,1) respondents in town had already been promised anonymity, and according to Bronfenbrenner (HO 59) this had been made clear to Vidich. In fact, Bronfenbrenner claimed that by this stage in the project an entire written, formal code of ethics had been formulated within the study, before Vidich was hired. The appearance of this code in the American Psychologist would seem to corroborate this. (The code is reprinted, HO 59.) However, the publication there was in 1952; and in any case, certain key interpretations cannot be made on the basis of the code alone.

This heady anecdote is presented here in order to explain the book's odd lack of data. Just because Small Town is a secondary analysis, in the sense used above, there is no reason that refined techniques of secondary analysis cannot be applied to the data. Let me list here some of the data which are conspicuously missing, and hope that on some day of amnesty the Cornell group will themselves publish it.

2,23/8

Of approximately 2,500 people as said by Vidich and Bensman ~~give us the following~~

~~The authors include some 2,500 people as being~~

a part of the Springdale township and psychologically connected with the community. ~~There are some 700~~ These comprise about 750 households. The authors break the households statistically into their class system as follows:*

* It seems likely that ~~it is hard to say whether~~ this is the full Sample A reported by Devereux (all of "the Springdale community" that could be reached-- ~~Devereux in~~ JSI 4, paragraph 4).

Devereux' Sample A ~~above~~, is 741 households, 2450 individuals, of which 1497 are adults not in school. ~~As may be seen from this unrelatedness, Cornell is still not helping as much as they might.~~

~~Vidich and Bensman seem to say their income data about 700 persons who are organized into approximately 700 households." (16)~~

TABLE I: Vidich-Bensman Classes

1	Middle Class	Independent entrepreneurs	13%
		Prosperous farmers	25%
		Professionals and skilled industrial workers*	9%
2	Marginal Middle Class	Aspiring investors	10%
		Economically and socially immobile ritualists*	10%
		Psychological idiosyncratics	2%
3		Traditional Farmers	10%
4		"Old aristocrats"	1%
5		Shack people	10%

N = 750 households (52 and 524)

This display leads directly to obvious questions.

Not single sp. First, these are households. How many people in each category? Where are the other ten percent? What were the criteria for coding?

The profiles of each class lead to a nice general idea of the different kinds of people in them, but whether the profile characteristics were defining of the class categories as coded above, a posteriori or what, is unstated.

Maybe income? Money figures are given for some of the classes passim in Ch. 3, -- range of capitalization, for the rational farmers, average income for teachers, for instance. Were these the only criteria? ~~We would expect not.~~ ~~In that case the core data would be merely derivative.~~

We suspect it is not, and would like very much to know how income data coincides with these classes.

The household incomes-- that is, stated income-- are distributed as follows, where I is income (in thousands) and the percentages refer to households:

TABLE II: Income Distribution in Springdale

Income	Households
Less than $2000	29%
$2000 - 4000	35%
4000 - $6	21%
Over $6 000	7%
Refusals, etc.	8%
	100

(Abridged from 17)*

So much for the survey data on class presented by Vidich and Bensman.

It could be argued that their weightless percentage figures (expressed in households!) are not just unenlightening but positively pernicious: for they lead, as the authors undoubtedly hoped, to an unattached sense of shrewd intuition. These figures just seem to boil, as it were, out of the tabulating machine.

However, in this paper, let us be more charitable. We cannot forget their descriptive profiles of the different classes, which both clear and interesting, to which the survey data is undoubtedly connected.

However, merely for our comprehension of it, and not out of mistrust, we would like to have ~~instead~~ the following cross-tabulation:

TABLE 3: Desiderata

Vidich-Bensman "Classes"	N (households)	N (people)	N (children)	N (voters)	N (unemployed)	Income Groups ...	Religious Denominations ...	Mean education	etc.
1.									
2.									
⋮									
5.									

This is not Utopian at all. According to Devereux,

> ... In the early summer of 1952 a complete canvass was made of every household in the Springdale community to obtain basic census-type information for all members of the household. In addition, an inventory of organizational memberships and positions was obtained for 741 households and 2450 individuals. (JSI 4)

That means that the data exist for many of these points of interest, perhaps all. If there is still bitterness at Cornell, a commendable outlet for it would be the supplying of precise data to supplant the berries of information that Vidich and Bensman leave hanging. ** This would not necessarily either show up Vidich and Bensman, or put the donor-analyst in a subordinate position. One of the most impressive features of middle-class face-to-face relations is the power to embarrass by being sportsmanlike. The work of S. Potter is illuminating in this regard.

FTNT.

~~This does not let Vidich and Bensman off the hook~~ As far as the correctness and analytic power of their class-schema is concerned, there are still a number of questions we might reasonably ask.

If we follow Bierstedt, who holds that definitions can be true* and that establishing empirically the reasonableness of concepts rather than accepting them as logically necessary is a proper part of sociological endeavor, we will then be able to judge better the appropriacy of their concept for Springdale, one possible tactic in the much larger quest of trying their ideas out on the rest of the world.

* Robert Bierstedt, "Nominal and Real Definition in Sociological Theory." In Llewellyn Gross (ed.) *Symposium on Sociological Theory*. White Plains: Row, Peterson, ...

All the time and in all their doings, according to the study, Springdalers are frankly or covertly oriented to thoughts of the city. To be aware of Springdale, they argue, is in a way to be aware of the things they do not want it to stand for. The city represents crime, cruelty, lasciviousness, anonymity, and every conceivable kind of cynical, malicious threat. But this negative image is not just a tradition; it is structured and motivated. The evil image is the Springdaler's justification for his enormous tax differential over the city man. The Springdaler, caught and committed in particular markets, must orient his actions in adaptation to far-flung structures of price and control. It would be impossible for him not to be aware of his situation; yet he must grasp at a sense of integrity that eludes him because he is economically, eduotionally and technologically disadvantaged. Hence it is little wonder that he is driven to a sense of his own moral superiority.

Here again we see, in the authors' presentation, a cluster of behaviors united by a central idea; like Weber's model of bureaucracy, it runs a central conceptual thread through a collection

of behaviors, particular and categorical, to which a human actor can orient himself. It can, like the models before, be expressed as a collection of items linked by a thread of logical or ontological importance; or it can be regarded as a central idea which people find to be of central merit in organizing the things that they do and think about.

Another such example from the community-studies tradition may be found in Deep South*. The authors found all of life

* Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.

in the southern city studied to be an enormous psychic and symbolic conspiracy to keep the Negro in his place.

However, the insinuating influences of mass society have far less of a personal quality, and are much less susceptible to a sense of personalistic involvement.

Political Control.

In their studies of the political control in Springdale, Vidich and Bensman found that the Village Board and Town Board were essential two lobes of an interlocking directorate. The village was run by the businessmen, oriented to low taxes, inaction and inanition; the township was run by the prosperous farmers for the purpose of keping their roads up. While the two controlling groups were not the same, they existed in comfortable accomodation and perpetuated themselves in power. All things in Springdale can change: appearance, population and its entire character as a town, but the same individuals and groups persisted in power.* (272)

This is not because the leaders have a "coldly and rationally derived calculus" (262;) it is not class interest, but an "intricate structure of leadership and... techniques of domination" (211) that controls the mechanism.

* Approximately this conclusion results from a study of Atlanta, Georgia (Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill:

University of North Carolina Press, 1953; and from certain contemporary-historical studies of the whole nation (C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.)

The Lynds, in the first Middletown volume, had a chapter on the dirtiness of politics. In the second volume they explicitly turned their attention to "The X Family," the family, apparently, who ranMuncie.

Other insights about the holding of power had appeared in Hunter, above; for intance, in his detalling of the way that "undrstructure" people are recruited and held to do legwrk and lower administration.

Enlightenment.

Vidich and Bensman treat generally of the blunting of issues and thequashing of enlightenment within the small-town m. The specification down to local units perverts or thwarts the efforts of enlightened peopleIn service or higher administration. In both Springdale and Plainville, a number of points of similarity appeared around associational groupings,

4,7/5

particularly the school and churches. Schools in both towns are seen as being caught (owing to pressures) with an inappropriate curriculum, and of keeping teachers and ministers vulnerable and exposed. Hence the ministers cannot express their broadminded and enlightened views (Small Town, 234-5,) and issues of professional involvement for them become thwarted into meaningless cognate fom: ecumenicalism becomes an unofficial "no poaching" rule between churches (245;) the ideal of missionary initiative becomes the norm of neighborliness. (255)

4,8/5

An interest in the function of churches and on their part in the community, even though large numbers do not participate, are common to studies of Plainville, Muncie and Springdale. But while the Lynds emphasize the inspirational uplifting and integrative function of the church, and West emphasizes the competition among churches

4,8/5

and the sporadic migrations from denomination to denomination within the town, Vidich and Bensman lay great emphasis on the moratorium that prevents similar things from happening in Springdale.

RM Walker*

* Charles R. Walker, Steeltown, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950.

quotes a minister in an industrial town as saying that he can reach more people by staying away from "issues". (223)

In Plainville, West explained the anomalous position of the agricultural expert from outside: the agricultural expert was shorn of direct influence in Plainville by a lack of general community trust, and had to disseminate his knowledge through opinion leaders, who would set an example and have results all could see. This was warm for him, when no one knew that planting Korean lespedeza, a highly successful cover crop, had been his idea. (223-3)*

2,5/2

* Selznick, in TVA and the Grass Roots, also documents the blunting of intelligences which others try to bring into the community. Selznick documents the way that agricultural expertise cannot go straight to the people who need it most, but becomes diluted by having to work through the associational groupings who least need it.

Moreover, as the Lynds pointed out (<u>Middletown</u>, 497-8) the ebb and flow of mass society -- markets, fashions, public moods-- leave accretions at different rates and in different places. This requires that everyone make continual adaptive adjustments within the framework of whatever decisions or referent commitments bind him. To Vidich and Bensman this means the "surrendering of illusions" peculiar to every class: the shack people "surrender " before birth, i.e., fail to acquire aspirations of any consequence. Aristocrats and traditional farmers are unaware of the adaptations necessary to remain culturally solvent; rational farmers build their farms; fee professionals lose interest in the hierarchy of advancement they have been trained to attack. (299-301)

Thus Springdalers cushion themselves in adaptation to dissonance, discomfort, and, we must presume, provincialism. With gimmicks to make life livable by blunting harsh reality-- for example, separating gossip from the public front, as is the Springdale norm (45)-- by the discrete choice of his own psycho-strategic path, he enters upon a regimen of actions which permits permanent sources of anxiety or frustration to be ignored, forgotten or mentally sequestered.

The view of personal adjustments which Vidich and Bensman present--

that personal psychic adaptations are strategic adaptations of orientation, interest and loyalty to environmental, economic and situational factors, orientation, interest and loyalty is not unlike the position taken by Gerth and Mills*:

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* Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Character and Social Structure: The Psychology of Social Institutions. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953.

> Most of the various interpersonal situations in which which we are involved exist within institutions, which make up a social structure; and changes of social structure make up the main course of human history. In order to understand men's conduct and experience we must reconstruct the historical and social structures in which they play roles and acquire selves. For such regularity of conduct, and of the motives for this coduct, as we may find will rest upon the historical regularities of these social structures, rather than upon any suprahistorical, biological elements assumed to be innate and constant with the organism. (14)

While the emphasis here is on "roles" and "history," it might as easily be on "acts" and "situations," of which roles and history are composed. The important thing here is the view's explicit acknowledgement of the variability of the occasions and determinants of action; difficult action that carries with it ~~possibilities~~ care, interest, calculation-- and at least the possibility of that most advanced epi-problem, the question of what one will come to care about, should certain courses be chosen.